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THE CIRCUIT WRITER

Historical Society
Northern New Jersey Conference
The United Methodist Church



Barbara Brooks Tomblin
Editor

Publication
of the
Historical and Archival Society
Northern New Jersey Conference
The United Methodist Church
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EARLY METHODISM IN WARREN COUNTY

William T. Noll

AN INTRODUCTION

In this year's *Circuit Writer*, the annual publication of the Historical and Archival Society, we again include several articles of historical interest to members of our Northern New Jersey Annual Conference.

Anticipating the year 2000 and the formation of a new annual conference with Methodists from both southern and northern New Jersey, we have included an article by the editor looking back to the highlights of the 1899 session of what was then called the Newark Annual Conference. In connection with the Society's annual meeting this April at the Vienna United Methodist Church, Rev. William T. Noll has written a short article about early Methodism in Warren County and a local Warren county historian and author, Frank Dale, has given us permission to reprint his article, "...By the Neck Until Dead" which recounts one of Warren County's most celebrated murder cases. In 1859 the Rev. Jacob S. Harden, a young Methodist pastor serving Mt. Lebanon and Anderson, two charges in rural New Jersey, was tried for poisoning his wife. Convicted, Jacob Harden was hanged to death in the jail yard of the Belvidere Courthouse on July 6, 1860. On a lighter note, we include several vignettes from our former Society president Dr. Robert Simpson and Frederick L. Maser's new book, *If Saddlebags Could Talk*.

Also featured in this year's publication is a report on last year's annual meeting at Calvary-Roseville Church, a report from the President of the Society, William T. Noll, and a list of nominees chosen by the Board of Trustees to be honored as Northern New Jersey Conference Historic Sites. We invite members of the Society to vote for three historic sites on the enclosed ballot.

Barbara B. Tomblin, Ph.D.
Editor

Methodism in Warren County dates back to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when circuit riders traveled on horseback along forest trails spreading the gospel. Towns in Northwestern New Jersey were isolated villages of a dozen or so homes, and the spiritual leadership provided by these itinerant preachers was a tremendous source of sustenance to remote bands of Christians searching for guidance and support. The circuit riders served under the leadership of Francis Asbury, Methodism's travelling bishop, who each year himself journeyed up and down the Eastern United States building the Methodist movement.

Asbury and the circuit riders did most of their preaching in private homes. Few church buildings existed in the small villages of rural America at this time, and many existing churches were off limits to preachers of the new Methodist Episcopal Church. But individual families opened their homes to provide not only a place for preaching but overnight food and lodging and provisions for the road ahead.

Today, there are three surviving homes in Warren County which once served as a stopping point for Bishop Asbury and the Methodist circuit riders. The most renowned is the McCullough house in Asbury, New Jersey, overlooking the Musconetcong River. The village was originally known as Hall's Mills, and its leading citizen was Colonel William McCullough, who had fought in the Revolution with George Washington, and was a prominent legislator and judge. Whenever Bishop Asbury was in the area, McCullough hosted him in his home and held preaching services in his barn. In 1796, when Bishop Asbury came to town to lay the cornerstone for the first Methodist church, McCullough persuaded his neighbors to rename the village in the bishop's honor. Asbury, New Jersey, is the first town in the world named for the pioneer Methodist bishop.

Bishop Asbury visited the community several times. Often, large crowds were accommodated by holding church services in McCullough's barn, which still stands on the property. The Asbury congregation was the center of an early circuit of churches. Bishop Asbury laid the cornerstone for the original church building in the village. The present sanctuary, built in 1914, is located at that same site.

A second historic home is the Cummins House, located on Route 46 in Vienna, owned originally by Philip Cummins. Bishop Asbury visited and stayed here often, and preached in the kitchen of this farmhouse, where services were held before the construction of the first church building, begun in 1810. Just down the street from the Cummins House is the sanctuary of the Vienna Church, built in 1854 on the site of the original chapel, and the

church cemetery, which contains the remains of many notable early Methodists.

The third home was the Van Ness House in Johnsonburg. Johnsonburg, then known as Log Gaol (or "Log Jail") was the original county seat of Sussex County. Later, the county was divided into Sussex and Warren counties and new county seats were established in Newton and Belvidere.

The Van Ness House was in Asbury's day an Episcopalian church building known as the Stone Church. As Methodism was an offshoot of the Church of England, Episcopalian congregations were sometimes more willing than others to allow Methodist preachers to use their pulpits. Asbury preached three times at the Stone Church, but wrote after one visit, "Rode to the stone church; and found stony hearts. The Methodists ought to preach only in their own houses." Nevertheless, while the Episcopal congregation disbanded in the 1850's, Methodism survives in Johnsonburg to this day.

Asbury also preached and helped to established congregations at Buttzville, Finesville, Hackettstown, Hope, Tranquility and Mount Bethel. At each but the last-mentioned location, Methodist congregations endure to this day. Buttzville deserves special note as the childhood home of early Methodist circuit rider George Banghart. Other Methodist "preaching points" in the late eighteenth century were found at Belvidere and Washington. Most of these congregations also maintain historic community cemeteries.

Methodism grew and prospered in Warren County in the nineteenth century. The system of itinerating preachers insured that in most small villages, if there was one church in town it was probably Methodist. The coming of the Morris Canal brought new commerce and industry, new residents, and new Methodist churches to such canal communities as Waterloo, Port Murray, Port Colden, and Phillipsburg.

A highlight in the development of Methodism in Warren County occurred in 1874 with the opening of the Centenary Collegiate Institute in Hackettstown. Through the years, the school has continued as a four year women's college, a co-educational preparatory school (private high school), a women's prep school, and a junior college for women. Today, it is once again a co-educational college with two and four year degree programs. It has a notable national reputation, particularly in the fields of fashion design and equestrian studies, and maintains close ties to the United Methodist Church.

Today, there are twenty four United Methodist Churches in Warren County. They range in membership from the twelve hundred member Trinity Church in Hackettstown to small chapels in villages like Montana and Free Union which are too small to be found on area maps. They worship in modern buildings in Blairstown, Knowlton and Panther Valley and in one hundred and fifty year old sanctuaries in Belvidere and Free Union. Each is an integral part of the community in which it is located.

Warren County is also fortunate to contain three historic villages in which a visitor can recapture as sense of what it was like to worship in a Methodist church over a century ago. One site is at Millbrook, a restored nineteenth century village in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, where a Methodist church has been rebuilt. Another is the town of Hope where St. John's United Methodist Church sits in the middle of an eighteenth century Moravian village. The parsonage is a restored Moravian home. Finally, there is Walerloo Village on the border of Sussex and Morris counties. The Waterloo Church has an active ministry in this living museum village recalling the iron mines of the Revolutionary War and the nineteenth century communities along the Morris Canal.

HISTORIC METHODIST SITES IN NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

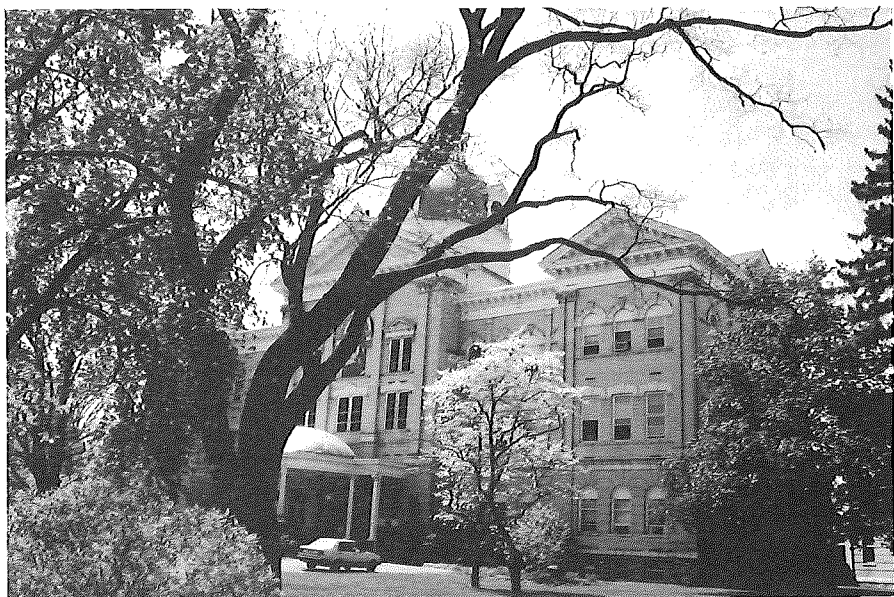
William T. Noll

For the past two years, the Trustees of the Historical and Archival Society of the Northern New Jersey Conference have asked members of the Society to designate historical sites of particular significance to American Methodism. Currently, we have eight such sites: the Asbury, Frankford Plains, Franklin-St. John's, Kingwood and Morristown United Methodist churches, Centenary College, Drew University, and the McCullough House in Asbury.

This year, the trustees have once again nominated ten sites for this honor. Each is described briefly below. A ballot is included in this journal; any member of the Historical and Archival Society is eligible to vote. Please return your ballot with your three selected choices to Dr. William Noll, 37 East Allendale Avenue, Allendale, NJ 07401, along with suggested sites for future ballots.

Historic Sites

Asbury Church, Asbury. In 1800 the village of Asbury became the first community named after the pioneer bishop. The Asbury congregation was the center of an early circuit of churches. Bishop Asbury laid the cornerstone for the original church building in the village. The present sanctuary, built in 1914, is located at that same site.



Centenary College, Hackettstown. Centenary was chartered in 1867 to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of American Methodism, and opened seven years later. Several sessions of Annual Conference have been held at the college. Puera Robison, one of the first ordained women in the Methodist Episcopal Church, was a teacher at Centenary in the 1920's.

Drew University, Madison. Established as a theological seminary in 1867 to commemorate the centennial of American Methodism, Drew was named after financier and benefactor Daniel Drew. The first college building was the Gibbons Mansion, renamed Mead Hall, which was built in 1832. Many bishops and other church leaders were students or faculty at Drew. The United Methodist Archives Center on campus houses the General Commission on Archives and History and the largest collection of Methodistica in America, including John Wesley's death mask and Francis Asbury's Bible and saddlebags.

Frankford Plains Church, Frankford Plains. Easily the oldest congregation in our conference, Frankford Plains was originally a Lutheran church established in 1710. The congregation became Methodist in the 1780's and Asbury Cooper, Lee, Morrel, Strawbridge, and other early circuit riders preached here. Among the historic places at this site are the eighteenth century cemetery and the unusual and historic octagonal schoolhouse, built in the mid-nineteenth century and recently restored.

Franklin-St. John Church, Newark. St. John Church, established in 1869, is the oldest African-American congregation in Northern New Jersey, and is regarded as the "mother church" of African-American congregations in our conference; having established mission congregations in Newark, East Orange and Montclair. In 1971, St. John Church merged with the Franklin congregation, which traces its history to 1830. The building on the present site was constructed in 1931 by the Franklin congregation.

Kingwood Church and Pulpit Rock, Kingwood. Methodist preachers, including Bishop Asbury, have preached from Pulpit Rock since 1776, before the American Revolution. The local landmark is the property of the nearby Kingwood, U.M.C., which dates from that time.

McCullough House, Asbury. Bishop Asbury visited the community named for him several times between 1789 and 1811. Each time, he stayed at the home of Revolutionary War veteran, Colonel William McCullough, the leading citizen of the village. Often, large crowds were accommodated by holding church services in McCullough's barn, which still stands on the property.

Morristown Church, Morristown. Methodism in Morristown dates back to a preaching visit by Bishop Asbury in 1810. The present church building, located on the historic town square, is the congregation's third. The second church was the site of the first session of the Newark Annual Conference in 1858.

Nominated Sites

Bethany Church, Fort Lee and Christ Church, East Rutherford. Bishop Hae-Jong Kim established Northern New Jersey's first chartered Korean-American congregation while pastor at Fort Lee and East Rutherford in the 1960's. Today, that congregation, Korean Community U.M.C., worships in Leonia. Christ Church emerged from the merger of two congregations in East Rutherford: Wesleyan and Carlton Hill. The Fort Lee church is also the original site of Bethany Church, Wayne, one of the largest congregations in our conference.



Cummins House and Vienna Church. Bishop Asbury visited and stayed here often, and preached in the kitchen of this farmhouse, where services were held before the construction of the first church building, begun in 1810. Just down the street from the Cummins House is the sanctuary of the Vienna Church, built in 1854 on the site of the original chapel, and the church cemetery, which contains the remains of many notable early Methodists.



First Church (Halsey Street and Central Churches), Newark. First Church was the product of a merger between two historic Newark congregations. Halsey Street Church, founded in 1808, was the original Methodist congregation in the city, visited often by Bishop Asbury. Halsey Street Church produced two bishops, Isaac W. Wiley and Charles L. Mead. Central Church was the home church of Bishop James N. Fitzgerald. Stephen Crane, author of *The Red Badge of Courage*, was the son of a Central Church pastor. After the congregation disbanded, First Church's ministry continued in the Wesley Towers senior citizen home.

Goodwill Industries, Jersey City/Harrison. Across America, Goodwill Industries is one of the most familiar ecumenical missions to the disabled. As happened nationally, Goodwill in New Jersey got its start as a Methodist urban mission. It traces its beginnings to Italian and Slavic ministries operated out of two row houses in Jersey City, across from the present parsonage of the Lafayette Church. Goodwill is now headquartered in a spacious building in Harrison, with branch stores around the state.

Morrell House, Chathan. Thomas Morrell served as an officer in the Revolutionary army before becoming a Methodist preacher. His sermon at the Chatham home of his uncle Jacob in the 1780's resulted in the establishment of the Chatham congregation. George Washington stayed at Morrell House when it served as the headquarters of General John Sullivan during the revolutionary War.



Mount Bethel Church, Mount Bethel. Bishop Asbury gave Mt. Bethel its name on one of his many visits to the area. A beam from the church where Asbury preached is incorporated in the present building. Richard Cummins, one of George Washington's Revolutionary War physicians is buried in the church cemetery.

Mount Tabor Camp Meeting Ground, Mt Tabor. The camp meeting ground of the Newark Conference, was chartered in 1869. Soon a village of Victorian summer cottages grew up around the tabernacle, built in 1885. In the 1930's, the cottages were converted to year-round homes. The tabernacle still hosts a variety of community activities.

Simpson Church, Perth Amboy. Bishop Asbury first arrived and preached in our conference in Perth Amboy in 1772. The church is located just a short stroll from the harbor where Asbury landed. Almost a hundred years later, members of the congregation began an early ministry with Norwegian and Danish speaking immigrants, resulting in the formation of Wesley Church, now located in Edison.

Wesleyan Chapel, Califon. This wing of the Califon church first constructed in 1824, was originally located in Oldwick, and is the oldest church building still in use in our conference. In 1866, the Oldwick congregation built and dedicated a new, larger sanctuary. The next winter, the old chapel was dismantled, moved by wagon, and rebuilt at Califon in 1867 as that congregation's first sanctuary.

Wesley Church, Belleville. Founded by Margaret Dow, this congregation predates the American Revolution, and is the mother church of many congregations in the area, including Methodism in Newark. Asbury preached in Belleville many times, beginning in 1774, and Thomas Morrell was the congregation's first pastor.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHIVAL SOCIETY TRUSTEES NORTHERN NEW CONFERENCE, UNITED METHODIST CHURCH REPORT TO THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1999

Dr. William T. Noll

The Historical and Archival Society seeks to preserve and celebrate our heritage as United Methodists as we look forward to a new millenium and the merger of the two New Jersey conferences.

Our Conference Archives: Our major concern continues to be the proper and adequate storage of local church and conference records. We have a computerized catalogue of our local church records, kept at the United Methodist Archives Center at Drew University. However, our district and conference records are still in temporary storage at the Verona United Methodist Church until a permanent location can be found. With the merger, adequate space must be found to house the archives of a combined conference.



Mount Bethel Church: This historic church site has been leased to a congregation of another denomination. The Friends of Mt. Bethel will be erecting historic markers to note the place of this church in the community and our conference history.

The Circuit Writer: This year's edition features the story of a nineteenth century conference pastor convicted and hung for murdering his wife.

Historic Sites: We have now recognized eight locations of particular interest to United Methodists as Conference Historic Sites. They are Asbury Church, Centenary College, Drew University, Frankford Plains Church, Franklin-St. John Church in Newark, Kingwood Church and Pulpit Rock, the McCullough House in Asbury, and Morristown Church. Three more will be selected this summer by a ballot of Society members.

Annual Meeting: The annual meeting of the society was scheduled for Saturday, April 24 in Vienna. The meeting scheduled a tour of the historic church and cemetery, and the nearby Cummins farmhouse, where Bishop Asbury often visited and preached. After lunch, an auto tour was planned to visit other noteworthy Methodist sites in Warren County to help participants get a sense of Methodist life in the nineteenth century. The tour included Free Union, Hope and Johnsonburg.

As I entry my final year as President of the Society, I thank God for all those who have helped to honor and sustain our rich legacy of worship and service as United Methodists in the Northern New Jersey Conference.


PROVIDING A HOME

**THE ANNUAL MEETING
NORTHERN NEW JERSEY
UNITED METHODIST
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

CALVARY-ROSEVILLE CHURCH EAST ORANGE SATURDAY, APRIL 25

ALL FACILITIES FULLY ACCESSIBLE

- ♦ 10:00 ARRIVAL AND COFFEE
- ♦ 10:30 A HISTORY OF UNITED METHODIST HOMES
BY DR. FRANK DENNIS
- ♦ 11:15 OTHER SENIOR HOUSING PROJECTS
BY REV. FRANK OSTERTAG
- ♦ 11:30 TOUR OF BISHOP TAYLOR MANOR
BY GERTRUDE KEHLEAY
- ♦ NOON LUNCHEON
- ♦ 1:00 BUSINESS MEETING



Last year's annual meeting, held at Calvary Roseville Church in East Orange, focused on our Conference's efforts to provide housing and related services for our state's senior citizens. Stimulating and informative presentations by Frank Dennis and Frank Ostertag were graphically made manifest as Gertrude Kehleay led us on a tour of Bishop Taylor Manor, which is located next door to the church. Members of the congregation capped the day by providing us with a delicious luncheon.

This year, our annual meeting will convene at the Vienna United Methodist Church. We will also visit the historic Cummins Farmhouse and other Methodist landmarks in the area.

LOOKING BACKWARD: THE NEWARK ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH ON THE EVE OF A NEW CENTURY

Barbara B. Tomblin

When the members of the Newark Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church gathered at the Halsey Street M.E. Church in Newark on April 5, 1899, Christians all over the world were anticipating the turn of the century.

For clergy members of the Newark Conference, however, the Forty-second Session, which began on April 5, 1899, differed little from its predecessors. Bishop Charles H. Fowler opened the session. "The Bishop announced the hymn beginning, "And are we yet alive? after singing of which, he led the Conference in prayer. He then read a portion of Scripture taken from the 5th Chapter of the Gospel of Matthew. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered by Bishop Fowler assisted by the Presiding Elders." The minutes of the proceedings do not, at first, reveal a sense of anticipation, apprehension or joy at the coming of the twentieth century. For Bishop Fowler and the members of the Newark Conference, it was "business as usual." (1899 *Journal*, 9).

What then were the joys and concerns of the 1899 session of the Newark Annual Conference? Although few explicit references were made to the coming century in the journal of the 1899 session, the reports of Presiding Elders (the 1899 version of District Superintendents), committees, and boards offer glimpses into the state and mood of Methodism in northern New Jersey. These give us a window to the past and perhaps some clues to the future of United Methodism in New Jersey as our two conferences move toward the 21st century.

1899 was a watershed year in American history. J. A. Hensey, secretary to the State of the Country Committee, captured the triumphant mood in his report:

Again assembled in annual session, we find the war ended, with one of the most remarkable records of history, with little loss of life, our navy had crowned itself with glory, by its courage and its success in the obliteration of the naval power of Spain; while our army, by its valor and spirit, has shown itself equal to every emergency it has been called upon to meet; and on this very day the final ratification of the treaty of peace has taken place at Washington. We record our grateful acknowledgement of the blessings of God upon our nation in giving victory to our arms, and in bringing the war so speedily to an end.

Hensey was, of course, referring to the Spanish-American War which had commenced in April 1898 bringing the United States victory over Spain and with it the status and responsibilities of world power. In what has been called "That Splendid Little War," the Asiatic Squadron of United States Navy commanded by Commodore George Dewey had defeated a Spanish squadron at Manila Bay and subsequently landed American troops to take possession of the Philippine Islands. En route to the Philippines, American troops had stopped off and claimed the islands of Guam and Samoa. In the Caribbean, Admiral William Sampson's warships had blockaded Cuba and in a short ground campaign by soldiers of Major General R. William Shafter's V Corps had with the aid of Cuban rebels wrested control of Cuba and seized an advanced base for the Navy at Guantanamo Bay. In a subsequent operation, the Navy landed American expeditionary forces under Gen. Nelson A. Miles on the south coast of Puerto Rico. They advanced on the capital and soon had secured control of the island. In the final treaty ending the war, Spain relinquished all claims on Cuba and ceded to the United States Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippine Islands. For better or worse, the United States would now enter the twentieth century as a full fledged world power.

If we are to believe the Committee on the State of the Country's report in the 1899 Newark Conference session *Journal*, the Methodist Episcopal Church greeted the nation's victory over Spain status with enthusiasm. Committee Secretary J. A. Hensey wrote:

We recognize the increased responsibility laid upon the church because of the added millions who have now come within the reach of Protestant Christianity. We commend the conditional appropriation made by the General Missionary Committee for the establishment of a mission in Porto Rico; and we trust that the proposed conference of the various denominations in regard to work in Cuba and the Philippines may rest in vigorous and harmonious co-operation for the evangelization of the people of these islands.

The Committee on the State of the Country saw new opportunities not only for evangelism, but for the work of the temperance movement. Endorsing the U. S. government's pledge to secure a free and stable government in Cuba "at the earliest date" and "government of the people, by the people, and for the people," in the newly acquired Philippine Islands, Hensey then wrote, "We ask that national authorities prohibit the liquor traffic in all the new territory that is under our control." (1899 *Journal*, 72).

There is no mention in the State of the Country report of concerns about the new American imperialism or about the scandal surrounding the U.S. Army's inept mobilization of troops and poor provision for their medical care during the Spanish-American War—concerns that would lead to an official government investigation by the Dodge Commission and subsequent reforms of the Army in 1904 including the establishment of an Army

Nurse Corps. Instead, on behalf of the State of the Country Committee, Hensey sounded a patriotic note. Recalling that the last session of annual conference in East Orange in 1898 was held amidst jingoistic cries for war with Spain following the sinking of the U.S.S. *Maine* in Havana harbor, Hensey said, "We recognized the gravity of the crisis, declared our conviction that all possible efforts should be made to secure peace. . .but at the same time pledged our loyal and unwavering support to the government in case war should be found inevitable." Hensey assured members that the "pledge was fulfilled; our pulpits were everywhere true to the demands of patriotic duty; and not only the sons of ministers and laymen, but many ministers and laymen themselves freely responded to the call of the government."

The State of the Country's report indicates that for Methodists in the Newark Annual Conference the lively issues of the day included disarmament and arbitration, polygamy, official government corruption, and temperance. Hensey's report noted with satisfaction the calling of a conference to be held in Holland at the request of the Czar of Russia to discuss disarmament, but brought forth no resolution to the Conference session in regard to world peace. The committee did, however, pointing to the recent election of Brigham Young, "an avowed polygamist," to Congress from the state of Utah, bring a resolution asking the Fifty-sixth Congress to pass an amendment to the Constitution making polygamy a crime against the United States punishable by severe penalties.

Citing the prevalence of official corruption the report praised the New York governor and legislature for their "thorough investigation and punishment of vicious practises among officials in the city of New York, the more so as the Borough of Richmond, an important portion of that city is within the bounds of this Conference." On an even more contemporary sounding note, Hensey wrote; "We believe that the public welfare demands the unsparing exposure and adequate punishment of wrong-doers everywhere, especially in high places in the national and state capitols."

Temperance remained a lively issue for the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1899. Believing the liquor traffic to be "the enemy of man and the foe of God," Hensey noted with satisfaction, "We rejoice over the action of the Fifty-fifth Congress in passing a law for the abolition of the canteen in the American army" but expressed regret that the prohibition extended only to liquor not the canteen itself. The committee brought three resolutions to annual conference session in regard to temperance. Vowing to preach "faithfully and lovingly" on evils of the liquor trade, the committee resolved that "as long as the Methodist Episcopal Church lives, it will have one constant, consistent, sleepless unreconciled enemy in the land. We will not keep silent, we will not retract one word we have ever spoken or written, we will agitate and educate, and some day legislation will do its perfect work, and the blush of intoxication will pale from the face of this Christian nation." Resolving to "pledge ourselves anew" to the zealous

prosecution of the battle against "the liquor abomination," the committee offered a resolution to make a special effort "to have our congregations, Sunday schools, and Epworth Leagues observe the Fourth of July each year as a day consecrated to the promotion of temperance reform" and "to interest our children and young people in this movement." (1899 *Journal*, 72-4)

Children and education were very much on the mind of Newark Conference members as they gathered at Halsey Street Church in 1899. In the Education Committee report, which President Nicholas Vansant declared had "an optimistic ring," he wrote: "The close of the century gives our beloved church a proud place in the field of Christian education and the connection can truly sing the doxology in long meter for the progress which has marked the church in the work of Christian education during the past century." Noting that the Newark Conference Education Society had assisted fourteen "worthy young men" in their work of preparation for the Christian ministry during the past year, Vansant called to the members' attention the work of the Drew Theological Seminary and its "masterly faculty." Reporting that Drew had "the largest roster of students ever," he said, "Drew stands for accurate scholarship and thorough equipment. The friends of the seminary rejoice in the magnificence of two friends, who contributed \$100,000 for a new administration and chapel building."

Vansant also acknowledged the twenty-fifth anniversary of Centenary Collegiate Institute and praised Centenary for "its loyalty to the denomination and thoroughness of instruction." Announcing that trustees of Centenary were determined to create a fund of \$60,000 to be expended for much needed improvements, Vansant wrote, "We believe this school, which is the pride of our Conference, will be loyally and royally supported by the ministers and laymen of our territory." (1899 *Journal*, 62-65)

The Epworth League was also celebrating an anniversary in 1899, its tenth, and in their report Chairman E. N. Crasto and Milton E. Grant listed 206 Senior Epworth Leagues with total membership of 14,575 and 121 Junior Leagues with another 6,400 members. Although an impressive number of members by today's standards, in a report on the spiritual condition of the church, the authors wrote, "There are too few boys in our Sunday schools." The committee reminded the Conference, "The work of saving the boys must begin very early. They soon slip way from us; it is difficult to retain them in our religious classes and in Sunday school. They go quickly in the way of the men, and away from God and the church." In fact, the committee lamented the difficulty of reaching children in general. "They are at an early age went to business, or so-called social functions claim their attention, or if at school, they are so occupied with their studies that it is difficult for them to attend religious meetings." They urged churches to put special stress on the classes for religious instruction for children and pastors to start Junior Leagues. The committee also felt that there were too few men in the churches. "They are found in the clubs, in the saloons, and they are tied to their business. We should devote prayerful energy to reach men...

The work of the evangelist who had the special power to reach men, is to be commended."

Rejoicing in the "number and beauty of our church edifices and the large amount of money collected for benevolent enterprises," the committee decried the lack of spiritual life among the people. "There is too much worldiness and too little 'scriptural holiness'." Arguing that prosperity might be of more harm to the church than persecution, the committee said, "We are in the swirl of worldiness, great political and financial enterprises. We must not as Christians forget we are also under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost." Trumbower cautioned Conference members not to misuse the funds raised by the Twentieth Century fund. "We must be careful not to make it a question of mere dollars and cents but of spiritual power. We will do all things better, if we keep ever before us this one thought that we have but one work, the saving of souls." (1899 *Journal*, 70)

The Twentieth Century fund was officially known as the bishops' Twentieth Century Thank offering, a proposed offering of twenty million dollars to be raised and spent over a period of three years beginning in January 1, 1899. Half of the funds were allocated to support seminaries, colleges and other schools and half to hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged, and other charitable church institutions.

The Newark Conference was pledged to raise its fair share of the offering. "While not relaxing our devotion to the Centenary Fund and Preacher's Aid Society, we will seek the cancellation of all our church and parsonage debts and loyally support the Deaconess' work, W.H.M. Society, Methodist Episcopal hospitals in Brooklyn and Philadelphia and support Centenary college, Drew seminary, as well as the Wesleyan, Syracuse and American universities." A commission was created in each district and within each local church to support the raising of money for the Twentieth Century fund.

While pledged to use part of the offering to support charitable causes including the work of Conference deaconesses and the Women's Home Missionary Society, the reports in the 1899 *Journal* reflect a church, and indeed a society, that was dominated by white men. None of the clergy members of the Newark Conference were female and all of the committee and board chairpersons were men. Women's issues receive scant attention although there is a report from the Board of Deaconesses, chaired by J. I. Boswell, a clergyman. This board, however, did have two laywomen members, Mrs. Anna Kent and Miss M. van Marter. No other women appear to be represented in the leadership of the Newark Conference as indicated in the *Journal* although from the reports of the presiding elders on the four districts it is obvious that Ladies' Auxiliaries and other women's groups were active in the life of local churches.

Likewise, the concerns of immigrants, minorities, and urban residents are not addressed in the reports of the 1899 Newark Annual Conference

although the work of the Freedman's Aid Society is lifted up in a report and the continuing efforts of deaconesses in the city is affirmed.

The laity are represented equally on the Centenary Fund and Preacher's Aid Society, the Trustees of Centenary Collegiate Institute, as well as other committees and boards. However, there is little discussion about the laity or laity issues with one exception. In his report, P. E. John Krantz said that he had asked every Quarterly Conference to send two laymen as delegates to the Laymen's Association. "We hail with delight the closer alliance of the laity with the ministry in Christian fellowship, and their heartier co-operation with us in our work," Krantz wrote. "We can not get along without the laymen, and the laymen can not get along without us." Rev. Krantz went on to say, "And I trust that as they shall meet together from time to time that not only equal representation, but other matters of real practical concern to the church will be discussed." These practical matters were, in Krantz' mind, the assistance of laymen in relieving pastors of the burden of financial responsibility and securing better ministerial support for the clergy "so the pastor's income may be more commensurate with the social requirements of some of his more well-to-do parishoners." In fairness, Krantz also hoped that laymen would give the ministers "outspoken and practical" advice on benevolent causes and promote "the old-fashioned feeling of Methodist hospitality." (1899 *Journal*, 53)

The turn of the century found local churches in the Newark Conference prospering. Churches in all of the four districts, Newark, Paterson, Elizabeth, and Jersey City, were experiencing substantial growth in probationers and membership. Much of this new vitality came from revivals held by individual churches during the year. The Presiding Elder of the Paterson District, John Krantz, reported that there had been 700 conversions in his district during the past year resulting in 650 new probationers. He specifically mentioned the revival at the Port Colden church which he said was "one of the first on the District to report an outpouring of the Spirit's power and forty souls were happily converted." The Newark District was also reaping a harvest of newly won souls, some 703 members joining the church. On the Jersey City District revivals brought in 35 new converts at Bayonne's 44th Street church, 31 at Bloomingdale, 74 at Deckertown, 31 at St. Paul's, 90 at Simpson, 50 at Janes, 42 at Lafayette and another 41 at Linden Ave., a total for the district of 818 new probationers. Elizabeth District churches were also successful in evangelizing with Fulton Street making fifty new converts and Flemington, Mt. Horeb, Summerfield, Trinity, Staten Island and Whitehouse each welcoming twenty or more new persons to their fellowship.

Foremost on the minds of all four Presiding Elders was the the ability of their local churches to pay pastors' salaries and support, reduce debt, and make improvements to their facilities. Many Newark Conference congregations were able to do one or all three.

In Elizabeth District, according to their Presiding Elder G. W. Smith, three new parsonages were built and "some heavy financial burdens lifted." Pastoral support was actually increased in ten of Smith's churches and he reported that the offering to missions reached an "a higher mark than ever before." Smith stressed pastoral leadership in the reduction of debt and the improvements made to his district church buildings. (1899 *Journal*, 33)

Although economic depression, the death of several loyal supporters, and inclement weather had "combine to sorely try the courage and increase the burdens of the faithful ones," on John R. Wright's Jersey City District, he wrote, "still our people have looked hopefully forward, and then with encouragement given by self-sacrificing pastors they have stood nobly for the church and in some of the charges the benevolences are in advance and most gracious revivals have been enjoyed." (1899 *Journal*, 38)

The year 1899 saw a number of new church sanctuaries under construction or completed in the Conference at New City, Bergen Point, Basking Ridge, Irvington, Chatham, and Belleville. Watchung or West Orange was added to the list of appointments and a property and a new building erected for the Sunday school and preaching point at East Orange on the corner of Grove Street and Park Avenue.

Children and youth remained a strong concern of all four presiding elders. They took particular pride in the continued growth and ministry of the Epworth leagues and junior organizations in the districts. P. E. Krantz reported that in his district there were 100 Sunday schools with 14,000 scholars and 1,400 teachers. "All honor and credit our Sunday schools. They are the hope of our church in the future." (1899 *Journal*, 55)

As the Newark Conference contemplated the beginning of a new century, John Krantz, presiding elder of the Paterson District, concluded his report with an inspiring exhortation for Methodists. "We are on the threshold of another important epoch in our church history," he wrote. "The Twentieth Century movement has come to stay." Confidently predicting that Methodists had the financial resources to support institutions and programs in the new century, Krantz urged his fellow to convince parishoners to give generously. "In order to excite the giving dispositions, the Saviour's passion for a lost and dying world must seize the believers hearts. This will follow from praying for Christ's kingdom."

Krantz urged that the bishop's appeal, titled, "Put thy hand between the King's hands," be printed and distributed in pamphlet form. "It calls for 20,000,000 souls and \$20,000,000 of money. If we get souls, the money will come. Let us pray and hope for and expect a tidal wave of revival influence to sweep over our Districts and Conferences. Nothing is impossible for an awakened and spiritualized church."

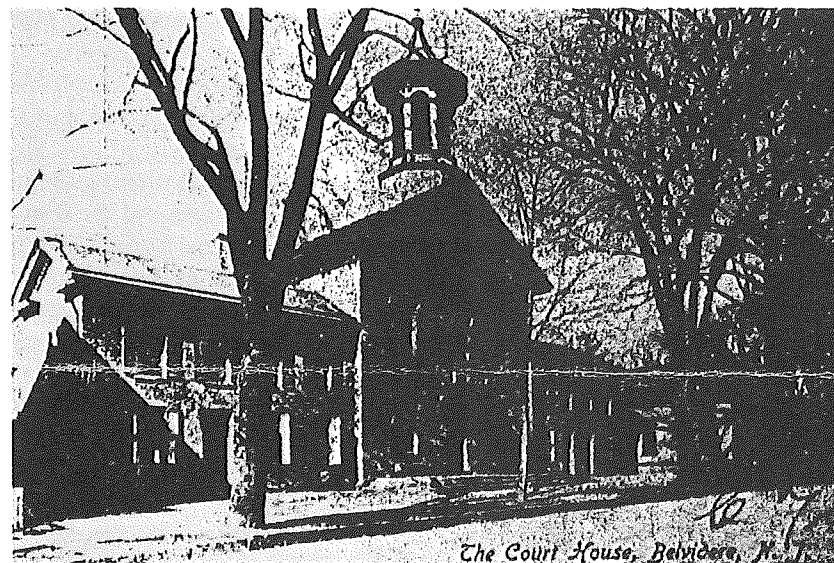
...By The Neck Until Dead

The Story of Crime and Punishment in Nineteenth Century Warren County

by Frank Dale

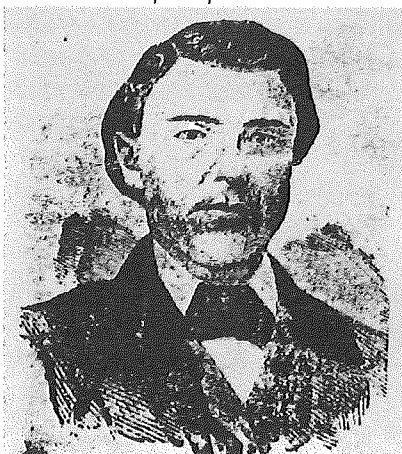
The following article is an excerpt from... "By the Neck Until Dead," by Frank Dale in which he recounts the story of the Rev. Jacob S. Harden, a Methodist pastor serving the Mt. Lebanon and Anderson Churches. According to a newspaper article in The Star on March 5, 1859, Rev. Harden was believed to be "the only clergyman ever executed for a major crime in New Jersey." Harden was appointed to the Mt. Lebanon Methodist Church in 1858 which according to Dale had been abandoned by its pastor. The 1856 Newark Conference Journal listed Mt. Lebanon as "to be supplied."

Although no longer in existence, Mt. Lebanon was linked as a two-point charge to the Anderson Church in Mansfield Township from the latter's founding in 1859. When Anderson was combined with Changewater and Port Colden as a three church circuit in 1922, the old Mt. Lebanon church continued on its own for several years before being abandoned. Ground was broken for the church building at Anderson on Thanksgiving Day, 1859 on land given by Philip H. Hann and his wife. The sanctuary was completed early the next year and Rev. Jacob S. Harden,



Photos by Betty Jo King and Michael King

who is described as "the first minister of the church," conducted the first worship service on January 20, 1860. Bishop Edmund Janes of the New York Area of the Methodist Episcopal Church dedicated the Anderson church on February 1, 1860.



JACOB S. HARDEN

FOR THE MURDER OF HIS WIFE ON THE 6TH OF JULY
BELVIDERE, WARREN CO., N.J.

Rev. Jacob Harden.

Chapter Three

DIVORCE, WARREN COUNTY STYLE

When the thing began they were just kids, not even teenagers. Jacob Harden and Louisa Dorland had known each other when their families lived in Blairstown. They had attended the town's one-room school together. Then the Dorlands moved away to Mt. Lebanon in Hunterdon County.

Young Jacob completed his education in Blairstown—as much as was available to a farmer's son in the middle of the last century—and then, at 17, taught

for a year in a country school in Stillwater. But the serious minded Jacob had joined the church at 13 and wrote later that "I felt it was my duty to prepare for the ministry". While teaching at Stillwater he preached, "exhorted" he called it, occasionally in local churches. After the school year was over, he took a job as a door-to-door peddler of Bibles and religious tracts in Hunterdon and Warren Counties—in those days the job was given the fancy title of "Colporteur"—and he did well. Then he was asked to take over a little country Methodist Church in Mount Lebanon, in Hunterdon County, that had been abandoned in despair by its previous parson. For the ambitious 19-year-old, it was an offer he couldn't refuse.

The young preacher was happy to discover that the Dorlands, including the vivacious Louisa, were members of his congregation and the friendship was renewed with mutual enthusiasm. Mrs. Dorland invited him for frequent visits and the lonely young minister accepted gladly. Almost at once Mrs. D did some "exhorting" of her own, describing the virtues of her daughter, how she deserved better than the local bumpkins. Often when he came to visit, the parents would leave the two alone, and go to bed. Soon, rumors began to fly that a marriage was in the offing, rumors fed by the imagination of the anxious mother. Young Jacob apparently never loved the girl and certainly wasn't contemplating marriage. To quote Jacob, "I was then but little more than nineteen ...without any knowledge of the world and knew but little of human nature." Jacob stayed away for several months but then got a letter from Louisa saying that she wanted to see him. He paid a call and the inevitable happened. "That night I stayed with her,"

confessed the young man. The visits became regular. Again the rumor mill went into action and members of his congregation began to whisper. One tale that was especially threatening to the young minister's career was that Louisa had given birth to Jacob's stillborn child. The young parson was becoming frantic.

Mr. D then paid Jacob a visit and demanded immediate marriage. The young minister refused, citing his youth, his small income, his debts. But he was willing to marry Louisa at some future time, he said. The father seemed pacified but Mrs. D was insistent. She threatened to prosecute Jacob for breach of promise, to ruin his career. A compromise was worked out; Mrs. D would put in writing a denial of the subversive rumors; Jacob would marry Louise in a year.

Although the denial was forthcoming, the rumors continued and the year preceding the marriage was filled with bitterness and dissension. Letters Harden wrote to his bride-to-be reflect this strain.

On April 13, 1858 he wrote to his fiancée, "There is so much talk that it will be necessary for me to stay away from your house as much as possible."

On April 23, "I don't know what will become of me. I had ten times—yes, one hundred times—rather die than live."

Again on May 19, "It appears to me now that you have the advantage of me and you are determined to use it even to my ruin."

Or on June 16, "...bear in mind that if you drive on that thing [marriage] this year it will not only bring upon me sudden destruction but will bring you more misery than you have ever known."

On June 24, "Of the measures you used, the more I think of them the less I think of you." and later, "I know by your actions that you seek my destruction."

This was hardly an idyllic engagement. One can only wonder why Louisa or her parents would pursue marriage with such an obviously unsound, possibly paranoid, young man, but pursue it they did.

After the wedding in the fall of 1858 the newly-weds lived apart for a while. Jacob continued to board, Louisa lived at home. They attempted to see more of each other but to quote Jacob, "Mrs D became quite as troublesome as before marriage". His duties in the circuit kept him on the move a lot and he was subject to long periods of illness, probably psychosomatic. His letters at this time speak often of suicide.

The Reverend Jacob was offered the Anderson Methodist Church in Warren County. He would keep his position at Mount Lebanon as well, but with the Anderson job there would be available a fine house owned by Dewitt Ramsay on Point Mountain Road in Mansfield Township. Here the couple could live together; here the despairing Jacob would find a solution to his marital problems.

"I commenced giving poison the same night Louisa came to Ramsay's. Gave it to her on an apple; she said there was something gritty on it; told



The Love Nest—first and last home of Rev. and Mrs. Harden in Mansfield Township.

her it was a powder; she asked what it was for, told her to prevent pregnancy. She ate it.

The poison of choice was arsenic, with some laudanum, an opium derivative, thrown in for good measure. He seems to have had no trouble getting his bride to accept the poison-laced food and drink that he offered. When she became ill and asked for a doctor he refused her. Oddly, the bride's doting parents were not around. Louisa lived only a few days, dying on March 9, 1859. Louisa was buried in the cemetery of the Pleasant Grove Church in Morris County.

People were shocked at the sudden death of the young bride and their hearts went out to the widowed minister. But his unseemingly haste in getting his bride underground and his obvious indifference to her death started people thinking. In a matter of days a coroner's jury was empaneled and met at the Anderson Hotel. Harden was asked to attend but didn't appear. The jury decided to exhume the body and have an autopsy performed. In the meantime, Harden disappeared.

Early on the morning of the 14th of March, Harden got aboard a train at the Asbury Station and went to New York City. There he boarded another train for Vermont, thence fled to New York State again, finally pausing in Cleveland, Ohio, where he had relatives. While in Ohio he got a letter from New Jersey advising him to "stay out of the way" or he would get arrested. He borrowed some money and got as far as Fairmount, Virginia, where he was arrested on April 17. He was brought back to New Jersey and lodged in Belvidere jail.

Here, with incontrovertible proof that his wife, Louisa, had died from massive doses of arsenic, Jacob Harden was indicted and tried for murder by James M. Robeson, County Prosecutor.

Although Harden's attorney, Jehiel Shipman, attempted to convince the jury that Louisa had committed suicide, the minister was convicted in May of 1859 after a brief 14-day trial. He was sentenced to be hanged.

Several attempts were made by attorney Shipman to have the death penalty commuted to life imprisonment; one petition for clemency contained 1200 signatures. The commutation procedure was a cumbersome one, even in those simpler times, and it was a full 14 months after conviction before the process had been completely exhausted and New Jersey's Governor Olden cut off any further appeals. With all hope gone, Harden confessed to the murder. He was sentenced to be hanged in the Belvidere jail yard on Friday, July 6, 1860.

The usual carnival atmosphere prevailed in Belvidere on execution day. Thousands of spectators arrived from all over the northeast. The Bel-Del Railroad ran "hanging specials" and bridges crossing the Delaware River were clogged with traffic. Every one of the several hotels in the county seat were filled to capacity and many home owners were glad to rent out a spare room for the occasion. From sunrise on the fateful day, streets around the court house were crowded and the park opposite was filled with spectators. As in earlier hangings in the little village the "gentler sex" was well represented. Some of the more agile viewers climbed trees and others perched on barn rooms for a better view. One such roof collapsed dropping its occupants onto the manure-covered floor below and throwing the mob into spasms of laughter. Vendors selling candy and fruit were out early; crudely made pictures of the killer were hawked.

Public hangings, that is, the actual execution in full view of the public, were illegal in New Jersey, but the mob hoped for at least a glimpse of the condemned man as he walked to the gallows, or a chance to view the gallows or the body after it was all over. However, 150 "honored spectators" were issued tickets allowing them to witness the actual hanging. Louisa's father, Samuel, had asked to be one of this group but was refused, at Harden's request.

Jacob Harden spent the morning of the 6th in his cell with clergymen, praying and singing hymns. Earlier he had hand-printed several large signs reading "Goodbye, Jacob S. Harden" which he gave to friends as mementos. These would sell for large sums before the day was over.

It was after noon when the doomed minister was led from his cell, noose around his neck, arms fettered at his sides. He was accompanied by the clergymen and a few friends. On the scaffold he knelt and prayed loud enough for all those in the jail yard to hear, and the turbulent mob fell silent. Some removed their hats. A jailer put a white cloth in his tied hands. He had pre-arranged with the hangman that when he dropped a handkerchief the trap would be sprung. He hesitated a moment, a final homily on

his lips, "God, have mercy upon me! Lord Jesus, save me in heaven!". The handkerchief dropped; the body fell.

An eye-witness described what happened next: "For a moment he hung perfectly still, with limbs separated and extended, then drew himself up with a strong contraction of the muscles, his pinioned hands strove to reach the cord which was choking out his life, his limbs were slowly bent, and as slowly relaxed seven or eight times...without a moan or a murmur, his spirit passed to God." In about five minutes a physician pronounced him dead. In about 35 minutes the corpse was taken down, returned to the cell to be cleaned. It was then put in a coffin which in turn was put in a horse-drawn hearse and the Reverend Jacob Harden, or least his earthy remnant, was taken to his boyhood home in Blairstown. After a funeral the next day, the body was interred on his father's farm. To discourage grave robbers from digging up the body and burning it, a ghoulish practice often inflicted on the corpses of murders, the grave was never marked and its exact location is unknown to this day.

Chapter 5

The Circuit Riders

by Rev. Dr. Robert D. Simpson

The following vignettes are from the recently published If Saddlebags Could Talk by Dr. Robert Drew Simpson and Frederick L. Maser. The book traces the history of Methodism from the early days until the 1920s from the perspective of circuit riders, early Methodist leaders, and ordinary people. It is available from Amazon.com, Barnesandnoble.com, the United Methodist Archives and History Center at Drew University in Madison, N.J., or the publisher, Providence House Publishers (1-800-321-5692) at \$11.95.

THE PREACHER'S REVENGE

In the early years of the nineteenth century a typical pastoral appointment lasted two years. One would think in that short time one might hardly have time to find the post office, leave alone get to know the congregation.

This was not the case, however, in Morristown, New Jersey, in the early 1800s. The membership record kept by one pastor recorded his personal opinion of certain members of the church. He did this as a parting legacy to his successor with a view of being helpful.

After certain parishioners names were the unflattering evaluations as follows, "Expelled," "No good," "Good for nothing," "Lost or strayed." Then with deathly finality, he reported one brother who had "Gone to Hell."

It must be noted in fairness, however, that notes of appreciation were also left, "Good," "First-rate," "Can't be beat," and "Excellent." There is, however, no record of how the congregation rated the character and behavior of the preacher.

BLACK HARRY HOSIER—THE AFRICAN WONDER (C. 1750–C. 1806)

Harry Hosier, familiarly called Black Harry, was an illiterate Methodist preacher of marvelous power and talent. Raised slavery, freed, and

converted to Methodism, Hosier became known as the African Wonder. Wherever he preached he was acclaimed by many as the greatest natural preacher they had ever heard. For several years, he traveled and preached with Asbury and Garrettson as well as numerous others of the prominent Methodist leaders.

As an African American, Hosier faced racial prejudice. One instance occurred in Hackettstown, New Jersey in 1803. Hosier was traveling the Trenton circuit with John Walker. A woman in the house where they were meeting said "she would not hear the black." Harry, hearing her remark, retired to a corner of the garden, and prayed with great fervor until the time for the meeting. During Walker's sermon Harry sat on a chair in front of him. When the sermon ended, Harry arose and, in the most humble manner, spoke of sin as a disease. All there were affected. Referring to himself, Hosier said that the Lord had sent a remedy by the hands of a physician, but alas, he was black. Some might reject the only means of cure because the hands by which it was sent to them were black. People were deeply moved especially the woman of the house, for she was converted by his message. In this case, prejudice was overcome by the power of Christ's love conveyed by the African Wonder.

WHEN SEEDS BEAR FRUIT

Henry Gerhard Appenzeller (1858-1902) was a founder of Methodism in Korea. Entering Drew Theological Seminary in 1882, he became interested in mission work in Japan and Korea. After seminary Appenzeller fulfilled his dream, and founded the first Methodist Church in Seoul, Korea. He literally gave his life to Korea founding churches and publishing agencies, and supporting Christian education. In 1902 he died in an accident while on his way to Mokpo.

The Appenzeller story has an inspiring turn. While at Drew, he served in New Jersey Greenvillage United Methodist Church in 1884. Recently, the Reverend Grace Chong, a native Korean and graduate of Drew, served that same church.

Appenzeller sowed the seeds of Methodism in Korea over one hundred years ago. Could he have ever dreamed that a female Korean Methodist pastor would serve the Greenvillage Church he served? Or could he have dreamed that Hae-Jong Kim, a member of the Northern New Jersey Conference and graduate of Drew, would become the first Korean to be elected a bishop in American Methodism?

Seeds have a way of bearing fruit, especially when they are sown and nurtured in Christian love.

A METHODIST MEMORIAL

In the museum area at the Commission on United Methodist Archives and History building at Drew University in Madison, New Jersey, is a little-known Methodist memorial. It is a rolltop desk. Two items displayed on this desk reveal its significance. The first is a photo of the desk's owner, Dr. Frank Mason North (1850-1935). Dr. North was the celebrated secretary of the New York City Church Extension and Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, an organization which continued the work of those who carried the message of the gospel into each new frontier as the nation grew.

The second is a framed manuscript copy of a hymn North wrote at this desk in 1903. This hymn, "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life," captures North's passion for the city and the hurting peoples of the world. It remains a timeless expression of the social gospel and serves as a fitting coda for the history of American Methodism, which the stories and anecdotes in this volume have revealed. In the words of this hymn we find the Methodist sense of mission that the circuit riders carried to city, farm, and village in their saddlebags.

Where cross the crowded ways of life,
Where sound the cries of race and clan,
Above the noise of selfish strife,
We hear Thy voice, O Son of Man!

In haunts of wretchedness and need,
On shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
From paths where hide the lures of greed,
We catch the vision of Thy tears.

From tender childhood's helplessness,
From woman's grief, man's burdened toil.
From famished souls, from sorrow's stress.
Thy heart has never known recoil.

O Master, from the mountain side,
Make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
Among these restless throngs abide,
O tread the city's street again.

NOTES